

# special section: Restyle Your Home



**FUN AL FRESCO**  
Entertain on the outside, R2

## > RENOVATE



MAGDELENA M

Are you totally bored with a room? Instead of diving headfirst into a full-blown, expensive reno, first try mixing textures, patterns and colours to make any dull living space a conversation starter.

## Easy facelifts for tired-looking spaces

You don't have to spend a lot, nor tear your home apart, to get a fresh look for summer, says interior stylist Janette Ewen

**ANDREA JANUS**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

In the lazy, hazy days of summer, you might be looking around the house and discovering some of your well-used spaces looking a little worse for wear.

Changing the look of the kitchen, bathroom or living room, in particular, doesn't have to involve a full-fledged reno, but can be done by installing new hardware, adding a coat of paint or just switching up the cushion covers.

Even if you're on a budget, "there are a lot of things that you can do," said interior stylist Janette Ewen.

Here are Ewen's top tips for re-

freshing those high-traffic spaces in the home without breaking the bank.

### Backsplash

One of the quickest and easiest ways to freshen up the kitchen is by adding or changing the backsplash.

"People think it's super expensive," Ewen said. "But because it's a smaller area, this is where you can splurge a little on a fabulous tile because you don't need a lot of it."

Installation is also fairly easy, she noted. You can DIY with a couple of YouTube videos.

A sophisticated alternative is to use wallpaper in a bold print and protect it with a cover made from a custom-

cut piece of plexi-glass.

"Prints really add luxury to a space," Ewen said.

### Splash of colour

If you are looking for a more dramatic change, painting cabinets is cheaper than installing entirely new ones. This can be another DIY project, or remove them and bring them to a painter who can spray-paint them quickly, Ewen advises.

While all-white kitchens have been popular in recent years, dark colours are becoming de rigueur.

It's become the showpiece of the home, Ewen says of the kitchen, especially if the space is used a lot for both cooking and entertaining.

Just looking for a pick-me-up?

**QUICK** continued on R4



MASCO CANADA

Changing the backsplash to a bold print or colour is an easy, affordable kitchen upgrade. Plus, you can easily DIY with YouTube instruction.

## > FRESHEN UP

### Bringing the outdoors in

Raise up the blinds, pull back curtains and switch throws to invite summer sun indoors

**HELEN RACANELLI**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The glory of summer is ever too brief, so that's a perfect excuse to bring the outdoors in. While some of us bring summer inside by picking up cheap-and-cheerful bouquets of flowers that beckon from the neighbourhood corner store, the firmly established and budding decorating addicts among us like to go full-tilt.

The most important (and easiest) place to start is with a judicious storing away of your space's existing wintery elements (faux-fur throw blankets and thick velvet curtains, we're looking at you).

Then you can incorporate summer by adding a few touches as basic as bringing home easy-to-care-for plants and even simple nautical decor elements, or you can go big and breezy with light, modern floral prints. Here's how.



LAURA COLLINS DESIGN

Drapes and throw-cushion pillows — either floral or bold-patterned — add a summery feel to any room.

### Edit and reorganize

"In the summer months, I make a few simple design changes around the house," says Toronto stylist and decorator Laura Collins of Elsie & Kel Design, who is known for her beachy, Florida-inspired style. "I remove everything from its surface and do a reorganize so that the design doesn't feel stale. This is an easy way to eliminate items no longer working

in your space and to redesign on a budget, and it's an opportunity to see if anything needs updating as well," she said.

If you need more convincing, read Marie Kondo's bestseller, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*.

**SUMMER** continued on R4

## > CONSTRUCTION

### Adding on to make that perfect home

For the urban homeowner, building out is fast becoming cheaper than moving out

**ANDREA JANUS**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

With Toronto's hot real-estate market showing no sign of cooling off, the days of buying a starter home and then moving as the family grows may be over — or at least on hold.

Additions or extensions to the home are becoming increasingly common, said HGTV interior designer and contractor Melissa Davis. This is especially the case in urban centres where homes are older and smaller.

"Homeowners stick with the house and make it what they need it to be as their family grows and their finances improve," Davis said.

The most common additions include blowing out the room of the home to add a living back beyond the kitchen, or moving the kitchen



Make sure you get the proper permits from the city before construction begins.

from elsewhere so it opens onto the backyard or garden, Davis said.

"The trend is to do the back elevation on the main floor as all glass," she said. "If it's a more traditional home, it's a series of french doors, and if it's a modern home, they will go with the accordion doors."

**ADDITIONS** continued on R4

> DECKED OUT

# Put 'chill' back into your outdoor summer do

Heed this advice to make backyard shindigs a breeze

**VICKY SANDERSON**  
 SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Surely, getting together on a summer evening used to be easier. Before it involved wrangling digital date books or stressing over the distinctions between vegan/vegetarian/paleo/pescatarian diets, wasn't having a bash as easy as asking your pals to come round for burgers and beer?

This kind of casual approach to outdoor design and summertime menus is a still an option, and embracing it may mean enjoying the season more, better and longer.

For informal get-togethers, conversation sets with low tables and flexible seating are more versatile than a conventional dining area. An outdoor umbrella that can be moved with relative ease helps, but if that's not in the budget, place seating under the shade of a tree.

Conversation sets works nicely, by the way, for entertaining children: throw large pillows on the ground around the table, add a card or board game, some hotdogs, lemonade and ice cream bars, and you've got the making of a pint-sized party that will keep them busy for hours. Turn on the hose and you may not see the little ones till it's dark.

Unbreakable dinnerware that looks like the real thing is increasingly available from retailers such as HomeSense, Hudson's Bay, Canadian Tire and Crate and Barrel. If you're not a fan of plastic, scoop up inexpensive plates and bowls from a local thrift shop. Pieces needn't match, but if you stick to the same colour family or a pattern, like stripes, it will look like you tried.

An outdoor area can be lush without an abundance of effort. Clustering large pots filled with pre-planted baskets adds quick colour, while tossing seeds for such fast-growing vines as Morning Glories into tubs will ensure greenery and blossoms for most of the season. Add sunflower seeds for fall blooms.

If even that's too much trouble, go faux — fake greenery has come a long, long way in the last five years, and will look especially pretty if you thread tiny LED lights through it.



LOWES.CA

A patio set positioned closer to the ground is great for casual affairs. If you don't have an umbrella, place the table under trees in the shade.

Christmas lights strung on the clothesline are a respectable stand-in for patio lanterns.

Candles (flameless if you prefer) grouped on a tray throw a nice light, but avoid scented versions of either. They can attract bugs and the air of summer evening needs no extra perfume.

Having a few staples in the fridge, such as the fixings for a charcuterie platter, will win you the best last-minute host award.

Look for and perfect easy one-dish meal recipes that require merely the addition of a simple salad or fresh, berry-based dessert.

Keep a small selection of cheap and cheerful wines, beers and ciders on hand, and don't forget to offer non-alcoholic options.

Above all, remember that the mantra for hot summer fun should always be, "Chill, baby" and govern yourself accordingly.

## CIDER AND MUSTARD SALMON VEGETABLES EN PAPILOTTE

**What you need**

- 4 green onions, finely sliced
- 2 cups (500 mL) snow peas
- 2 cups (500 mL) carrots, julienned
- 1 zucchini, sliced into rounds
- 2 stems of celery, finely sliced
- 1 1/2 lb (680 g) filet of salmon, skin removed
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) old fashioned mustard
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) honey
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) cider
- Salt and pepper, freshly ground
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) fresh parsley, chopped

**What you do**

Preheat the barbecue to high or the oven to 500 F (260 C).

On the work surface, lay a large rectangle of aluminum foil. Overlay with a slightly smaller rectangle of parchment paper. Arrange the vegetables on parchment and top with salmon.

In a bowl, mix together mustards, honey and cider. Season generously and drizzle over salmon.

Cover with a second rectangle of aluminum foil. Seal edges by folding and crimping.

Place the papillote directly on the barbecue grill. If cooking in the oven, place on a baking sheet. Either way, cook for between 25 and 30 minutes. Recipe courtesy of Molson Canadian



## SUMMER BERRY SALAD WITH MINT

**What you need**

- 1/4 cup (60 mL) fresh mint, chopped
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) sugar
- 8 oz (227 g) organic strawberries, hulled and chopped
- 6-oz (177 ml) container organic blackberries
- 6-oz (177 ml) container organic blueberries
- 6-oz (177 ml) container organic raspberries

**What you do**

Crush mint and sugar in a mortar and pestle until well-blended (or place sugar and mint in a blender or food processor and pulse until well-blended). Place mint-sugar in a large bowl and add strawberries, blackberries, blueberries and raspberries. Gently toss until evenly combined. Recipe courtesy of Whole Foods



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Position your patio umbrella so it can be moved easily, adapting to the shift in sunlight.

## LAVENDER LEMONADE MOCKTAIL

**What you need**

- 1.5 ounces (44 mL) of lemon juice
  - 1.5 ounces (44 mL) of lavender syrup (look online for recipe)
  - Top off with Club Soda
- Recipe courtesy Collete Grand Café, colettetoronto.com



> SET UP

# Stretch it out before digging in, expert says

Prep your body — the most important garden tool of all

**TARA NOLAN**  
 SPECIAL TO THE STAR

As you lace up your old gardening shoes and head out to the yard, do you think of stretching before you pull on your gloves and get to work? Most gardeners don't, which is why according to the Ontario Chiropractic Association, "gardening is the most common source of back and neck pain reported by patients in the warmer months."

"I don't think that people realize that gardening is a form of physical activity," said Dr. Katherine Tibor, a chiropractor with a practice called Balanced Healthcare in Toronto. "They think of it as a chore and something that needs to be done, and forget about warming up and taking care of their bodies when gardening."

To avoid stiff joints, sore muscles and, even worse, chronic neck and back pain, what exactly should you do before you start digging in the dirt? It may seem silly standing in the grass doing warm-up exercises, but your body will benefit in the long run. Tibor recommends doing a bit of gentle cardio, such as walking on the spot and then stretching out the muscles that you're going to be using that particular day.

For example, high knee bends will stretch out the lower back and arm reaches forward will prep the upper body and middle spine.

There are also certain precautions gardeners should take once they get into the yard to plant or weed or hoe. Tibor said that one of the most common complaints she gets from patients is low back pain because a homeowner has gardened for a whole day or a whole afternoon without taking any breaks. However, other injuries can inadvertently occur while you're lifting and straining and digging, as well.

One day last spring, Yvonne Cunningham, a garden writer who lives in Ancaster, Ont., was out in the garden for several hours, crouched down, transplanting perennials.

"My right ankle got pretty sore after several hours of this, but I wanted to get the job done," she remembered.

Cunningham figures a bad sprain a year prior and the repetitive flexing from crouching caused her old injury to flare up again. After that long day, she couldn't walk — her ankle was so swollen and in pain she needed crutches. Cunningham now uses a kneeling pad so that she's not crouching and putting unnecessary strain on both her knees and ankles.

Besides stretching before and after gardening, there are also routine, preventive measures that can be taken, such as doing yoga.

"As gardeners, we tend to lovingly jump into tasks such as planting, weeding and pruning, forgetting about how we use our body," said Jane Rostek, a yoga teacher at the Clayton Park location of Breathing Space Yoga in Halifax. "Regular prac-



ISTOCK

When bending over while gardening, keep your back straight and a slight bend in the knees.

## AVOID TRIPPING THROUGH THE TULIPS

Here are a few key tips that Katherine Tibor of the Ontario Chiropractic Association recommends to avoid injury when you're in the garden.

- When transporting soil, move one bag at a time. Get as close as possible to the bag and bend down with your knees with your back straight so you can grab the object.
- Get stools or kneeling mats ready, as gardener Yvonne Cunningham did. You could use an old cushion from your patio furniture.

- Tibor recommends long-handled instruments that can help you when weeding, as long as they're not too long or short for your body, which could lead to further injury.
- Try to avoid twisting or swivelling your body while gardening — keep your back as straight as possible at all times.
- Wear sensible footwear with good support and proper traction. Avoid wearing sandals or flip-flops, which could lead to ankle injuries.

tice builds strength and flexibility," she explained.

Yoga also conditions our bodies to engage muscles not otherwise used in daily life and allows us to become more in tune with the capabilities

and limitations of our body, she said. According to Rostek, a few yoga poses that are beneficial to gardeners include: child's pose, which stretches the lower back and shoulders; downward facing dog, which builds shoul-

der strength and stretches the muscles in the back of the legs and ankles; seated forward bend, which provides a stretch behind the legs; and all of the warrior poses, which build strength and flexibility in the legs, core and shoulders.

"Lengthening and strengthening poses tend to build strong shoulders, stretch the front of the body and are excellent for wrists — you will love and hate these poses at the same time," Rostek said.

If you do feel pain, it's important not to ignore it.

"Keep in mind the longer you've had the complaint, the longer it takes to go away," Tibor said.

Make an appointment with your doctor or another health-care professional, such as a chiropractor, to address your concerns.

"Remember your body is your best gardening tool," Rostek added. "Take care of it and it will serve you well!"